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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO  
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RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 1940  
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 0791  
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 1666  
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ FEB LIMA 5448  
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID 0923  
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 1806  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RUEAHLA/HOMELAND SECURITY CENTER WASHINGTON DC  
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHINGTON DC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
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RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

S E C R E T SANTIAGO 000118

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/05/2018  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [SOCI](#) [CI](#)  
SUBJECT: NEW INTERIOR MINISTER SEEKS HELP ON INDIGENOUS  
ISSUE WHILE CONTINUING CLOSE COORDINATION WITH USG ON  
SECURITY MATTERS, INCLUDING VENEZUELA

REF: A. A) SANTIAGO 00098  
[1](#)B. B) SANTIAGO 00015  
[1](#)C. C) SANTIAGO 00021

Classified By: E/Pol Counselor Juan A. Alsace for reasons 1.5 (b & d).

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Summary  
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[1](#)1. (S) Interior Minister Perez Yoma told the Ambassador February 6 that he is concerned about the potential radicalization of Chile's indigenous population, including funding from foreign terrorist groups and/or Venezuela. The GOC would like to draw on U.S. experience in addressing indigenous issues. Perez Yoma said U.S.-Chile cooperation on security matters is excellent but would like his Ministry to serve as a central clearinghouse for coordination between the various USG and GOC agencies, including training and information sharing. End summary.

[1](#)2. (U) Ambassador Simons paid a courtesy call February 6 on new Minister of Interior Edmundo Perez Yoma, who took office January 6, as part of President Bachelet's third cabinet change (ref C). The Ambassador was accompanied by E/Pol Counselor, RAO Chief, Legatt, and Acting DEA Chief.

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I'm In Charge  
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[1](#)3. (C) After exchange of pleasantries - Perez Yoma was curious about the previous day's U.S. "Super Tuesday" electoral results and appreciated the Ambassador's readout - the Minister agreed with Ambassador's assessment that the bilateral security relationship is excellent. He preferred, however, to have his Ministry "more fully informed" concerning the nature and scope of programs offered to Chilean police and security organs by individual USG agencies. Perez Yoma stressed he did not seek to impede direct contacts between USG agencies and the national police (Carabineros) or investigative police (Policia de Investigaciones de Chile), both of which fall under

Interior's operative and administrative control, but that top levels of Interior should be apprised to better ensure GOC coordination. The Carabineros, for example, will sometimes "act independently," Perez Yoma said, implying that if Interior has a global view of USG programming with the Carabineros and other GOC security organs, he would be better able to ensure all are working from the same page. He suggested he and the Ambassador talk regularly; "our objectives are 100 percent the same as yours." The Ambassador agreed, adding that USG training programs, coordination with GOC security organs, and sharing of information are both effective and purposefully low-key.

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Indigenous Radicals Funded Externally?  
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14. (S) As had Secretariat General of the Presidency Minister Viera-Gallo the week before (ref A), Perez Yoma raised with the Ambassador GOC concern with the "Mapuche issue," Chile's largest indigenous group and one that has over the past several months seemingly taken a turn to radical and sometimes violent action (ref B). While intelligence is unclear, funding of the Mapuche by the FARC "and Chavez" is possible although, he noted, he wasn't sure some of the monies aren't being funneled off to other activities since Mapuche radicals remain "weak and disorganized." Potential Mapuche ties to ETA are also possible. "I would like," he said, "your help in following the money." RAO Chief noted his agency is working with Chilean colleagues to identify FARC and ETA actors outside Chile who might have potential links to Mapuche radicals. Legatt added that the FBI is

coordinating with the Carabineros to assist in identification and potential prosecution of actors within Chile.

15. (C) Perez Yoma said he would appreciate drawing on the broader experience of USG experts on indigenous issues. E/Pol Counselor replied the Embassy is currently coordinating internally on how to best provide assistance to the GOC. Besides intelligence sharing, we are considering how to use public diplomacy assets. The U.S. has experience at both national and state levels on the integration of indigenous peoples into the broader U.S. society. We want to identify and share with the GOC what has and hasn't worked for us. Perez Yoma suggested the Embassy work closely with Deputy Secretary Felipe Harboe on this issue. (Note: Embassy has

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an excellent working relationship with Harboe on other law enforcement issues.)

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Comment  
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16. (C) Perez Yoma was reportedly brought on as seasoned political operator intended to bring discipline and focus to Bachelet's sometimes unruly administration. As Interior Minister he directs cabinet meetings when Bachelet is not present; press reports suggest he used his first meeting to hammer home the message he is in charge. He was all business in this initial call and very clearly concerned that the Mapuche issue has the potential to underscore Bachelet's perceived weakness on public security, an issue that falls squarely within his bailiwick. End comment.  
SIMONS